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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Policy frameworks and thematic issues, including new emerging issues: grassland and rangeland

Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: Gender

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In accordance with the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as set out in decision 30/COP.13, and the Gender Action Plan Roadmap (GAP Roadmap), as set out in decision 24/COP.15, gender equality remained a priority for the UNCCD during the period under review. Many gender-related activities have taken place in support of enhanced implementation of the Convention, as set out in the GAP and the GAP Roadmap.

This note summarizes the activities of the Secretariat in response to decision 24/COP.15. In this respect, the report provides information on gender parity across the Convention, an overview of consultations related to a dedicated women's participation fund, and the overall actions by the secretariat to support the implementation of the GAP and the GAP Roadmap.

It also includes a summary of (i) the UNCCD Gender Caucus held at the twenty-first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in 2023; (ii) gender-related outcomes of the national reporting process under the UNCCD; and (iii) the performance results of the UNCCD secretariat in relation to the System-wide Action Plan for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. This document concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth session.



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I. Background

1. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was developed in response to decision 30/COP.13 to support the gender-responsive implementation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework) and to strengthen the implementation of the policy framework on gender (decision 9/COP.10). Since its adoption at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13), the GAP has been the backbone of the implementation of the Secretariat’s gender-related activities. In addition, through decision 24/COP.15, the Parties to the UNCCD adopted the Gender Action Plan Roadmap (GAP Roadmap) to identify concrete activities and measures to accelerate the implementation of the GAP.
2. By its decision 24/COP.15, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat, in collaboration with the bodies constituted under the Convention, to monitor and report on the level of gender parity throughout the Convention and to consult with women’s organizations and organizations that provide funding for women’s participation in global treaty processes, with a view to extending such funding to official sessions of the UNCCD.
3. Decision 24/COP.15 also requested the secretariat to facilitate the convening of the Gender Caucus on an annual basis and to continue to work with relevant international organizations, including the other Rio conventions, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and other United Nations entities, to assist Parties in the implementation of the GAP and the GAP Roadmap, particularly in the areas of policy, advocacy and research.
4. In addition, decision 24/COP.15 requested the Secretariat to synthesize and analyse information on gender issues contained in the national reports submitted by Parties as part of the reporting process.
5. This note provides an overview of the progress made in responding to the requests made by the COP in decision 24/COP.15, as well as other relevant gender-related activities undertaken by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism. Parties may read this note in conjunction with documents ICCD/CRIC(22)/4, ICCD/CRIC(22)/5, ICCD/CRIC(22)/6, ICCD/CRIC(22)/7-ICCD/COP(16)/CST/8, ICCD/CRIC(22)/8, ICCD/CRIC(22)/9, ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5, ICCD/COP(16)/2, ICCD/COP(16)/3, ICCD/COP(16)/4, ICCD/COP(16)/15, ICCD/COP(16)/18, ICCD/COP(16)/19 and ICCD/COP(16)/22.

II. Gender parity across the Convention

6. The issue of gender parity was noted in decision 24/COP.15, paragraph 6, by which the COP requested the secretariat, in collaboration with constituted bodies under the Convention, to monitor the level of gender parity across the Convention and report its findings to sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the COP. Accordingly, an analytical study was undertaken to establish a baseline for monitoring gender parity across the Convention in UNCCD subsidiary bodies and institutions: the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), the CRIC Bureau, the COP Bureau, UNCCD secretariat staff, and national delegations to the CRIC and the COP. A snapshot of the gender parity situation in each of these bodies is provided, as well as recommendations tailored for each on how to achieve a better gender balance.
7. The main findings from this analysis are:
 - (a) The status of gender parity across UNCCD is uneven, with commendable levels of parity obtained in the CRIC Bureau, COP Bureau, SPI and secretariat staff, within a balanced range of 40–60 per cent women and men in each of these;
 - (b) At the same time, gender parity is currently lacking in several of the UNCCD bodies and groups, namely: the CST, the Civil Society Organizations Panel, the Global Mechanism (GM) and overall national delegations to CRIC and COP. Participation of women

in these groups was found to range between 0 to 33 per cent, with an average of 20 per cent, in these cases;

(c) For the UNCCD bodies or groups which have not yet achieved gender parity, there are recommendations in this report encouraging consideration of corrective measures to be taken temporarily, until an acceptable level of gender parity is achieved in each case;

(d) There are currently no strict requirements of parity under any of the UNCCD bodies or structures. With a view to maintaining consistent levels of gender parity over time, and from one election period to the next, Parties may consider establishing intentional and explicit guidelines which limit the maximum number of men or women in any UNCCD body (to 60 per cent);

(e) It should be noted that it is more challenging to achieve and maintain a gender balance in bodies with a small number of members, as one or two positions can have a substantial impact on shifting the gender parity percentages of men as compared to women;

(f) Significant gender imbalance is found in national delegations to CRIC and COP, with delegates to the twenty-first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 21) comprised of 67 per cent men and 33 per cent women, and delegates to COP 15 comprised of 73 per cent men and 27 per cent women.

8. The full report on gender parity across the Convention can be found on the UNCCD website.¹

III. Consultation on funding of women's participation in official UNCCD meetings

9. Exploration of potential funding support to increase women's participation in official UNCCD meetings was noted in decision 24/COP.15, paragraph 7, by which the COP requested the secretariat to consult with women's organizations and organizations that provide funding for women's participation in global treaty processes with a view to extending these funds to also cover official UNCCD meetings. In compliance with this decision, an online consultation was held in April 2024 with 75 registered participants. This workshop was co-hosted with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which also shared its gender parity data and approaches, to harness synergies among the Rio conventions. The diversity of organizational representation at the workshop was very positive, with participants from civil society organizations (CSOs) accredited to UNCCD, women's organizations, international non-governmental organizations, sister United Nations agencies, UNCCD staff, Parties to the Convention, and funding agencies. The following questions were asked in an online poll: (1) Would your organization consider extending funding to support increasing the number of women delegates at UNCCD COPs and CRICs? and (2) Do you have any suggestions for other suitable funding sources to pursue? Of the respondents, 36 per cent indicated that they would be willing to consider extending funding for this purpose, and 43 per cent indicated that they would possibly consider providing such funding. The rest of the respondents indicated that they would not be able to consider providing such funding support.

10. With regard to other funding sources to pursue, the following were mentioned: (a) core funding; (b) offering the possibility for countries to add voluntary earmarked funds; (c) awareness-raising sessions to involve organizations and governments and obtain their support; and (d) UNCCD assisting women's organizations to attend COP 16. Next steps may include informal conversations with the organizations and agencies that indicated in the consultations that they can consider providing support to women delegates to UNCCD CRICs and COPs. The UNFCCC experience with its Women Delegates Fund may be reviewed to ascertain lessons learned that UNCCD could build on if a decision were made to establish a similar fund.

¹ <https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/monitoring-gender-parity-levels-across-unccd>.

IV. Support the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and its Roadmap, especially in the areas of policy, advocacy and research

11. A number of activities were conducted for the implementation of the GAP and the GAP Roadmap.

12. In accordance with priority 3 of the GAP (Strengthening women’s land rights and access to resources) and point 2.1 of the GAP Roadmap (Design and implement awareness-raising campaigns on women’s land rights), the UNCCD launched a major worldwide campaign to promote women’s land rights in early 2023 and continued this campaign through 2024. The “Her Land. Her Rights” campaign was launched in March 2023 on International Women’s Day, and it was featured on 17 June 2023 during the Desertification and Drought Day global observance held in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The campaign promotes successful examples of women and girls’ contributions to sustainable land management (SLM) and mobilizes support to advance land rights for women and girls around the world. Campaign materials have been developed in all six United Nations languages. The campaign is achieving very high global visibility on social media, so far reaching more than 300 million viewers with the #HerLand hashtag on various social media platforms, including X, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. The #HerLand virtual exhibition was unveiled at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly in Vancouver, Canada, in August 2023, and also presented at CRIC 21 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Campaign materials have been developed in all six United Nations languages.

13. As a key element of the campaign, UNCCD Land Ambassador and former President of Finland Tarja Halonen has engaged female leaders worldwide to sign the “Her Land. Her Rights Call to Action”, which has so far been endorsed by more than 20 women leaders, including the former Presidents and Prime Ministers of Chile, Costa Rica, Estonia, Iceland, Namibia and New Zealand. UNCCD Goodwill Ambassador Inna Modja has led the development of a digital-first exhibition on women, girls and land (<https://herland.global/>) and has lent her voice to the #HerLand song composed by fellow UNCCD Goodwill Ambassador and Grammy Award-winning musician Ricky Kej. In addition, a related film on women, girls and land will premiere at COP 16, as well as a book showcasing inspiring examples of women and girls’ leadership in SLM and mobilizing support to secure their land rights across the world. Details on the #HerLand campaign can be found on the UNCCD website.²

14. In cooperation with Töpfer, Müller, Gaßner (TMG) and the Robert Bosch Foundation, UNCCD also co-hosted the “Strategy Workshop on Women’s Equal Rights to Land and the Rio Conventions” in July 2023 in Berlin. The objective of the workshop was to bring together international partners and jointly explore potential strategies and capacity-building activities to increase gender equality and support Parties and other Rio convention stakeholders by developing a coordinated global strategy to leverage the unique experiences and capacities of the Rio convention secretariats and their partners.

15. This was the first ever workshop on women’s land rights involving all three Rio conventions, and it brought together 60 stakeholders from more than 30 countries. The workshop included key actors that are working to implement women’s land rights, including national focal points, convention secretariats, other United Nations bodies, and civil society organizations. The outcomes of the workshop included the following: (1) Participants requested that the three Rio conventions integrate the work on women’s land rights at the highest level; (2) National focal points attending the session agreed to raise the topic at the national level when addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation; and (3) A working group was established with the representatives of the conventions and other interested stakeholders to accelerate action and build partnerships to ensure that women can access land ownership.

² <https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/gender/herland>.

16. A follow-up workshop was co-hosted by UNCCD, UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity, TMG and the Robert Bosch Foundation in Berlin in June 2024 to take this process further and focus on the objectives of (1) how to operationalize the synergies among the three Rio Conventions; and (2) how to strengthen the role of grassroots organizations on gender-responsive land governance.

A. Research on women-led solutions for drought resilience

17. In accordance with activity 2.4 in the GAP Roadmap, and given that qualitative data is required to understand the lived experiences of gender inequalities and the leadership roles of women in combating drought, in early 2024 UNCCD initiated a study on women-led solutions for drought resilience and adaptation. The purpose of this research study is to identify examples of the essential role played by women in SLM in drought-prone locations and regions so that their initiatives may be duly valued, expanded, and replicated, and to potentially attract resources to scale up these women-led actions. A researcher was hired in January 2023, and a call for submissions was distributed widely through UNCCD and its stakeholder network. A total of 87 case studies were submitted from a wide range of countries from several UNCCD Regional Implementation Annexes and will be assessed by an experts group comprised of representatives from UNCCD, the United Nations Development Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Landesa, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Once these are systematized, the key findings will be presented at the International Day of Rural Women in October 2024, and at COP 16 in coordination with the Gender Caucus.

B. Support to WOCAT for gender-responsive data-based policy design

18. Research work supporting WOCAT in developing gender-responsive SLM technologies and approaches was scaled up and expanded in 2024. This support corresponds to decision 24/COP.15, paragraph 11, by which the COP encouraged the secretariat, subject to the availability of funds, to continue collaboration with WOCAT to enhance the implementation of the GAP and the GAP Roadmap, including to generate gender-disaggregated data, to inform gender-responsive policy design for achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN). This second phase will entail the selection of up to 40 organizations to apply the gender questionnaire, gathering gender-disaggregated data in the field and providing feedback on how to improve the questionnaire. The selection of these organizations will be done by July 2024, and Phase 2 will be completed by July 2025. New topics such as value chains, entrepreneurship, youth and employment will be included in the questionnaire, and it will be adjusted to better reflect UNCCD-related gender indicators. Training materials will be developed and tailored for different stakeholder groups based on a needs assessment, and a gender module in English, French and Spanish will be created and integrated into the WOCAT database. The results of this research will be reported on during a Gender Caucus session at COP 16.

C. Capacity-building activities

19. Several activities were undertaken to build capacity in advancing women's empowerment and gender equality in relation to desertification/land degradation and drought, focusing on topics such as: what constitutes a gender-transformative approach; how to conduct a gender analysis; intersectionality and inclusion; prevention of sexual harassment; gender and climate action; and how to support women farmers' associations and women environmental defenders. These activities were carried out in collaboration with the Group of 20 (G20) Landwise webinar series, FAO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Landesa, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the accredited CSOs Both ENDS and Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. The target participants for these capacity-building sessions included national focal points, Parties, UNCCD staff, new interns in the onboarding process, and CSOs and other stakeholders.

20. To celebrate the International Day of Rural Women in October 2023, the Gender Policy Officer and the Regional Liaison Officer for Regional Implementation Annex V (Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)) held a capacity-building workshop in coordination with FAO, UNEP and UN Women, featuring the CEE experience in empowering rural women working in the agricultural sector through policy innovation and the key role of women farmers' associations. Presentations were made by nine Parties, in addition to United Nations agency representatives and farmers' associations.

21. In addition, in collaboration with the GM, a session was held to update the Africa Group (Regional Implementation Annex I) on gender and land tenure issues and activities emanating from CRIC 21. Also, a presentation on UNCCD's gender framework was made at a regional meeting of Regional Implementation Annexes IV and Annex V.

22. UNCCD also co-organized gender-themed side events at the Land Pavilion at the UNFCCC COP 28, in collaboration with UN Women, IUCN, FAO and the Nurturing Community of Knowledge Practice for Women in Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems network (WeCAN).

V. Support the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and its Roadmap, especially in the areas of strategic partnerships and mobilizing financial resources

23. Noting the very limited resources allocated to gender gap analysis and gender action plans during project preparation, the GM has been integrating gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives throughout its support, including in capacity-building, assessments, feasibility studies, stakeholder consultations and the preparation of project concept notes and full project proposals as described in document ICCD/CRIC(22)/5.

24. Approximately 533 participants (42 per cent women) representing government organizations, CSOs, development partners and funding partners have participated in GM-organized project preparation capacity development workshops. The workshops provided participants with comprehensive information on various aspects of project design and implementation, including ensuring adherence to gender mainstreaming standards and exploring financing opportunities for projects and programmes. Efforts also continue to be made to undertake more detailed land tenure assessments during project design as land ownership affects men and women's abilities to engage effectively in project interventions if not considered during project design.

25. According to the recent midterm evaluation of the GAP, "Nearly all LDN target country profiles and projects and the national drought plans now incorporate some considerations related to gender. In general, stakeholders considered that the implemented activities and delivered outputs were effective in achieving the GAP's goals. For example, 50 per cent of the respondents to the survey conducted for this evaluation reckoned that the technical assistance and capacity-building for integrating gender matters into LDN and drought projects and programmes was very or extremely effective (15 per cent considered it slightly or not effective)."

26. The evaluation continues, "The GM support to the preparation of specific country-level studies on gender matters such as gender gap analysis was also well rated by the respondents of the survey for this evaluation: 53 per cent considered that these studies were very or extremely effective (compared to 15 per cent with a negative opinion). However, it was highlighted during the interviews that a persistent challenge seems to lie in encouraging individuals and institutions to independently apply these tools and checklists internally. There has been a tendency for organizations to rely on external consultants for such tasks, and while consultants may execute the process effectively, the internal capacity to carry out these activities is often neglected. It seems that there is a gap in ensuring that individuals within the organization learn how to apply these tools and checklists autonomously, rather than depending solely on external expertise."

VI. Gender Caucus (summary)

27. After the new Gender Policy Officer was hired in July 2023, the UNCCD Gender Caucus was revitalized, with 29 standing members engaged in four online planning meetings, including CSOs, country Parties and United Nations agencies. Two in-person sessions of the Gender Caucus were held at CRIC 21 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in November 2023, with a total of 123 persons in attendance. These sessions featured presentations by the UNCCD, Landesa, FAO and the WeCAN network on: rolling out the GAP Roadmap, recommendations on policy phrasing on gender for CRIC consideration, and women's empowerment for drought-resilient drylands. Parties that presented during the panel were Mongolia, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. The session also included the FAO launch of the Making Every Voice Count for Adaptive Management (MEV-CAM) toolkit.

28. Opening remarks were made by the UNCCD Executive Secretary, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, who emphasized that securing land tenure for women is crucial for necessary land restoration, and that beyond meetings, actions must be taken on the ground to empower women, provide resources and acknowledge their leadership in tackling desertification/land degradation and drought attendance comprising 54 per cent women and 46 men. Country Parties from all Regional Implementation Annexes attended, as well as several sister United Nations agencies and a number of CSOs accredited to UNCCD.

29. Two or more Gender Caucus sessions will also be held during COP 16 to share expertise and best practices on topics that arose during CRIC 21, including examples used by sister United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations of gender-responsive indicators based on sex-disaggregated data. The summary report on the Gender Caucus sessions held at CRIC 21 is available on the UNCCD website.³

VII. Gender-related information contained in the national reporting process under the UNCCD (PRAIS 4)

30. The GAP recommends using national reports to document the efforts made to address gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of the UNCCD. Decision 24/COP.15 requested the secretariat to synthesize and analyse information on gender matters included in national reports submitted by Parties as part of the reporting process for consideration at CRIC 21. This decision also encouraged Parties to submit, on a voluntary basis, reports on the implementation of key national-level activities contained in the GAP Roadmap and requested the secretariat to compile such information on a regular basis, including monitoring the level of gender parity across the Convention, and report its findings.

31. The national performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS 4) reporting process monitors progress made in the implementation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework adopted at COP 13 (see decision 7/COP.13). As regards gender-related issues, national reporting templates now include a gender-specific indicator for strategic objective 2 (measuring trends in population exposure to land degradation disaggregated by sex). Another set of gender-related questions are incorporated in the implementation framework, providing Parties with the space to report on matters relevant to the gender-responsive implementation of the Convention and the GAP in terms of (i) financial and non-financial resources; (ii) policy and planning; and (iii) actions on the ground.

32. Of the 117 national reports received under PRAIS 4, 107 countries submitted information on the implementation framework, with 85 countries reporting on their approaches and/or experiences related to gender issues.

33. Among the topics related to financial and non-financial resources, countries underlined the importance for women to gain access to and benefit from a range of financial and non-financial resources.

³ https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-04/UNCCD%20Gender%20Caucus%20Report_CRIC%2021%202023%201.pdf.

34. Countries with successful strategies and approaches emphasized the need for specific funding streams for women that accompany programmes and projects related to land management, restoration, climate change, natural resource management and/or rural development.

35. Providing women with training and education to facilitate their access to financial resources, establishing women-friendly quotas, and incentivizing their participation in decision-making processes were also mentioned as promising strategies. It has been observed, for example, that having a quota of 40 per cent women and taking a gender-responsive approach throughout the project leads to an increase in female participation and more equitable distribution of benefits.

36. A commitment to gender mainstreaming in national policies and legislation was also mentioned, as well as the development of technologies and systems that promote equality and equity for marginalized groups such as women and youth to facilitate access to financial means and reduce discrimination and gender gaps.

37. Further details can be found in documents ICCD/CRIC(21)/3, ICCD/CRIC(21)/9, ICCD/CRIC(22)/5 and ICCD/COP(16)/CST/5.

VIII. System-wide Action Plan for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – performance assessment of the UNCCD secretariat

38. In communicating the results of the 2022 United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – performance assessment of the UNCCD secretariat, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women commended UNCCD on exceeding 5 and meeting 9 out of 17 relevant performance indicators. The following achievements were noted in particular: (1) significant results in gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) through UNCCD's programmatic initiatives; (2) strengthening of the gender architecture through recruitment of a gender officer to lead the GEEW initiatives; and (3) maintaining the equal representation of women at all staff levels.

39. The UN-SWAP assessment also encourages UNCCD to build on the momentum of these achievements by undertaking the following: (1) finalizing the UNCCD Gender Policy; (2) establishing a financial benchmark and tracking the related disbursement of funds for the implementation of the gender equality and women's empowerment mandate; and (3) strengthening inter-agency linkages and sharing lessons learned by taking part in a UN-SWAP peer review.

IX. Midterm evaluation of the Gender Action Plan

40. In 2023, the UNCCD commissioned an evaluation of its GAP, to be carried out by an external independent evaluator as part of the midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. This GAP evaluation is an independent external assessment of the results achieved in the GAP priority areas with a mainly formative nature, as it focuses on further improvement of the implementation of the GAP. In this sense, the evaluation aims at informing Parties and other key stakeholders about the successes and challenges in the GAP implementation and results. Building on its findings, the evaluation makes recommendations to further improve performance for advancing gender equality in the context of the UNCCD.

41. The UNCCD appreciates the evaluation's generally positive findings about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the GAP, as well as the concerns noted about its sustainability and resource limitations.

42. The evaluation found that the GAP is well aligned with the approaches, priorities and needs of countries, on-the-ground communities and other partners. In general, stakeholders considered that the following activities implemented to achieve the GAP's goals were particularly effective: technical support and capacity development; knowledge products and publications; and advocacy, awareness-raising and women's participation.

43. Furthermore, it found that the efforts made by the secretariat and the GM resulted in progress in mainstreaming gender into UNCCD activities and towards the GAP objectives in the following dimensions: improved understanding and awareness (85 per cent of the respondents gave a positive rating); capacity to integrate gender equality into national/local policies and strategies (78 per cent of respondents) or projects and programmes (92 per cent of respondents); improved responsiveness of the project proposals to donors' requirements (61 per cent of the respondents); and increased national commitment to gender equality (90 per cent of the respondents).

44. The full evaluation report is available on the UNCCD website.⁴

45. The full report by the Intergovernmental Working Group to Oversee the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework Midterm Evaluation Process is available on the UNCCD website.⁵

X. Conclusions and recommendations

46. Based on the progress made to fulfil the requests contained in the decisions referenced in this note and in the implementation of the GAP and the GAP Roadmap, the following general conclusions are made:

(a) The secretariat and the GM have taken important steps toward addressing the gender-related issues that impact the implementation of the Convention, from reporting to research and capacity-building. Successful initiatives such as the Gender Caucus and gender-sensitive green employment creation under the Great Green Wall initiative should be continued and taken to scale;

(b) Several gaps are apparent in the Convention's ongoing work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and leadership. These gaps include shortcomings in gender parity across the Convention and in particular in the national delegates attending CRICs and COPs; and the need for more robust gender-responsive data and indicators to effectively assess the different ways in which women and men are exposed to and affected by drought in countries, taking into account intersectionality. Consequently, suitable measures should be taken to close these gaps;

(c) To date, the UNCCD has been reliant on short-term donor funding for the work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in keeping with the mandate from Parties under the GAP. To ensure the continuity and maintain the momentum of this work programme over a longer-term horizon with a view to sustainability, there is a need to secure dedicated resources under UNCCD core funding;

(d) The midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework noted that women's economic empowerment and equal land use rights are shortcuts towards LDN and accordingly recommends that the secretariat and the GM set as priorities for advancing gender equality under the UNCCD the economic empowerment of women and equal land use rights. For further details, please refer to chapter II.E of document ICCD/COP(16)/2.

47. Parties may wish to consider the proposed draft decision contained in document ICCD/COP(16)/22 at COP 16.

⁴ <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/GAP%20Evaluation%20final%20June%202024.pdf>.

⁵ <https://www.unccd.int/convention/official-documents/cop-16-riyadh-saudi-arabia-2024/documents/iccdcop162>.